

at Westminster springing up before our eyes, the magnificent club-houses now decorating Pall Mall and St. James's, and the numerous princely palaces, streets, and squares, springing up as it were by a stroke of some magician's wand, it is both a shame and national reproach to us that the sovereign of the country has no fitting habitation in the metropolis. The situation of Buckingham Palace is the most unfavourable that could possibly be chosen; and were it not for the accidental circumstance of Bird-cage walk, and the beautiful sheet of water, it would be intolerable. The old red-brick palace offended the eye, when stone and stucco became the prevailing taste; and the sums of money expended over it by the whims and caprices of George IV., would have been amply sufficient to erect an imperishable monument to the memory of some great architect, and to the taste of the times in which we live. A site in the Green Park, to the west of Constitution Hill, would have been better chosen than the present one, the gardens of Buckingham Palace being thrown into the park to compensate for what would be taken away; or St. James's Palace might have been altered.

What excites our greatest surprise is that the Woods and Forests should tolerate the low rookery of Crow-court and Angel, and the still lower den of infamy, well known to aristocracy as King's place, within the very heart of courtly St. James's; these places ought to have been pulled down long ago, and the several sites appropriated to noble mansions.

Bury-street, Duke-street, King-street, and St. James's-street, were built some few years before St. James's Church; many of their leases, which were for 99 years, have fallen in; the whole space occupied by these streets is crown property, and many reasonable complaints are made by the inhabitants against the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, in consequence of the exorbitant ground rents charged under the new leases, wholly unwarranted by the size of the houses or the class of persons who occupy them. On the east side of Bury-street formerly stood the house of the celebrated Guy, Earl of Warwick; and, previous to the improvements, a court, existing under that name, marked out the spot where he sought concealment after one of his lost battles. Bury-street was once inhabited by the first rank and fashion, and even to the present day, it is noted as the temporary residence of the gentry during the parliamentary season; in common with all the neighbouring streets it has a much less enviable notoriety for black-legs. The range of houses occupied by the Hon. Colonel Needham, have been thrown into one, and magnificently fitted up, with a taste peculiar to the eccentric owner.

In King-street is the celebrated Almack's, a most unsightly building outside, but admirably adapted in the interior for the purposes to which it is appropriated. Here also is St. James's Theatre, built in 1837 by the celebrated vocalist, Mr. Braham; it was run up very rapidly, being finished in little more than seven weeks. The house was opened with the opera of "Agnes Sorrel," in which Miss Glossop made her first appearance. King-street has much improved in appearance of late years; the court, a disgraceful rookery leading into St. James's-street, being thrown open, the Bazaar and the fine range of buildings were then built.

St James's-square has many stately and commodious mansions; but is rapidly losing cast in consequence of the introduction of club-houses, and the removal of fashion to Belgrave-square. The principal mansion is the town residence of the Duke of Norfolk. This part of the town abounds with noble club-houses, of which we shall speak more particularly in the next.

(To be continued.)

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.—Her Majesty has most graciously signified her intention to open the Royal Exchange in the course of the last fortnight of the month of October. His Royal Highness Prince Albert is to accompany her Majesty upon the occasion.

SIR R. PEEL AND MANCHESTER PUBLIC PARKS.

WE have very sincere and very great gratification in laying before our readers the copy of a letter received by the Honorary Secretaries of the Public Parks' Committee from the Premier—a letter which reflects honour upon the Right Hon. Baronet for the sentiments it avows, the associations adverted to, and the acknowledgments made; and which we commend to general attention as a noble example, worthy to be followed by many other gentlemen formerly connected with Manchester, and on whom it has much stronger claims individually. The following is the Premier's letter:—

"Whitehall, Sept. 7, 1844.

"Gentlemen,—Although I have no longer any personal connection with the town of Manchester, by property or other local tie, yet, considering Manchester to be the metropolis of a district, to the industry of which I and my family are under very deep obligations; and most heartily approving of the wise and benevolent design to provide for those who are doomed to almost incessant toil, the means of healthful recreation and harmless enjoyment, I willingly contribute to the furtherance of that design, and offer my cordial wishes for its success.

"I request my name may be added to the subscription which has been commenced for this purpose, for the sum of one thousand pounds.

"I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"ROBERT PEEL."

"Malcolm Ross, Esq.;"
"Edward Watkin, Esq."

This munificent donation is, to our mind, greatly enhanced in value by the graceful and liberal terms in which it is conveyed. We hail it, too, as a pledge that, in the estimation of every benevolent mind, no petty party feelings should be allowed to obtrude into this excellent design for the benefit of a large and industrious community. That object, which commands from Sir Robert Peel on the one hand, and from Mr. Mark Philips on the other, such substantial proofs of their cordial and generous support, can scarcely, even to the most suspicious mind, be deemed a political movement to serve a party purpose. We trust to find the example of Sir Robert Peel addressing itself with all the weight that justly belongs to it, to those who, after having realised handsome fortunes in Manchester, are now enjoying them in other parts of the kingdom. They, too, are under deep obligations to the industry of Manchester; and we hope they will not lose so favourable an opportunity as is now presented, for proving that they are not insensible to the claims herein made upon their liberality. Let the strength of their past associations and reminiscences be shewn by their present zealous and cordial generosity.

We understand that, at a meeting of the committee on public parks on Monday, a resolution was unanimously adopted, expressive of their high appreciation of the opinions expressed by Sir Robert Peel, and conveying to him their sincere thanks for his munificent gift, and for the gratifying terms in which he has communicated it.—*Manchester Guardian*.

STATE OF PARTS OF THE METROPOLIS.

THE Report (with minutes of evidence annexed) of the Commissioners for Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, was lately laid before Parliament by command of her Majesty, and printed for circulation among the peers, &c. Some of the evidence is of deep interest. In that of Mr. Henry Austin, architect, and resident engineer during the construction of the Blackwall Railway, he stated that in that capacity he had opportunities of examining the habitations of the labouring classes in the district through which that line passes. Many of the rooms of the tenements, he says, were small, varying in size from 8 feet by 10 to 10 feet by 12, and generally under 8 feet in height. "The inmates, houses, and every thing in them, horribly filthy; and there was such a complete want of ventilation, that it was extremely offensive to go into their rooms on account of the smell. The privies were frequently close to the back-door, always in a neglected and offensive condition, and frequently running over."

It was the state of the subsoil that first drew my attention to the necessity of abolishing cesspools in towns. I found that the fecal matter, or the soakage from the cesspools, had in some cases actually joined from house to house. The soil in the immediate connection with the houses and surrounding the foundations was so saturated from cesspools as to be, in my opinion, in a worse condition than in dung-heaps. It was exceedingly offensive to remove, and it was constantly matter of remark how human beings could be found to do it. When exposed it drew forth the complaints of the neighbours at some distance." In speaking of the existing tenements for the poor, he refers to an "existing court at Westminster, called 'Snoo's-rents,' a striking example, among many worse, of the dreadful condition to which the poorer classes are reduced from the want of proper structural arrangement and control. This court is of considerable width—upwards of 20 feet, but the houses are mostly without yards, and the refuse, when become intolerable inside the house, is deposited in the court itself, the whole centre being a pool of black stagnant filth, that accumulates from time to time, and is left to decompose and infect the whole neighbourhood. I wish I could convey the faintest notion of the awful stench that is engendered there. Ventilation, or rather a healthful state of the atmosphere, is impossible. What little disturbance of the air does take place, would appear only to render its state more intolerable. The chief reasons for this dreadful state are the want of yards to the houses, and the width of the court being greater than required for the traffic. Had the court been narrower, the accumulation could not have taken place, for the houses would have been inaccessible, and some other provision for the refuse must have been made. . . . In wet weather, when the water attains a certain height in the court, it finds its way into an open, black, pestilence-breathing ditch in a neighbouring court; but in the ordinary state of things, the whole centre of this place is one mass of wet decomposing filth, that lies undisturbed for weeks, from which, so dreadful is the effluvia at times arising, that in the tenants' own words, 'they are often ready to faint, it is so bad.' . . . There is one exposed privy at the end of the court for the use of the inhabitants, male and female, of nine houses, which has not been emptied for four years or more, and in seasons of wet is actually overflowing with soil. . . . The supply of water consists in this, that sixteen houses are accommodated with one stand pipe in the court. On the principal day (Sunday) the water is on for about five minutes, and it is on also for three days in the week for one half hour, and so great is the rush to obtain a modicum before it is turned off, that perpetual quarrelling and disturbance is the result, and water-day is but another name for dissension." Such is the state of things the New Metropolis Buildings Act is designed to obviate, and ultimately to remedy; and indisputably remedy is imperative.

CHINESE CAST-IRON BUILDINGS.—A Berlin correspondent of the *Debat* writes: "M. Gutzlaff, the missionary in China, states that the art of constructing buildings of cast-iron, of which the English pretend to have lately been the discoverers, has been practised for centuries in the Chinese empire. On a hill near the town of Tsing Kiang, in the province of Kiang Nan, is a Pagoda entirely of cast-iron, covered with bas-reliefs and inscriptions, which, from their forms, characters, and dates, are as old as the dynasty of Taang, which is as far back as from the fifth to the tenth century of the Christian era. It is an octagonal pyramid, 40 feet high and 8 feet in diameter at its base. It has seven stories, each with curious historical pictures. This building surpasses every thing M. Gutzlaff had before seen in China."

ACCIDENT TO ONE OF THORWALDSEN'S WORKS.—The *Journal des Debats* announces that an accident occurred, a few days since, in the studio of the late celebrated sculptor Thorwaldsen, at Copenhagen. The colossal model in plaster of Esculapius, the last work which this illustrious artist ever completed, and which was intended to serve as a pendant to his colossal statue of Hercules, placed in the Museum of Copenhagen, fell to pieces, and was so completely broken, that this magnificent specimen is totally lost for all purposes of art.